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views. Shall we reproduce the original form of the text with its unregulated orthography and its caprices of editors and proof-readers, or shall we adopt the final form in which the author left his work? If we take any play of Goethe or almost any poem, we find that the spelling of words and the punctuation have gone through successive changes, any one of which represents simply the fashion of the time, based upon no uniform or consistent principle, and subject to change in the edition of a few years later. We must study the language of the young Goethe in the first edition of 'Götz,' but the play as we read it presents the forms of a half-century or more later. The first is instructive, the last is final. But within the period since Goethe's death the orthography has changed still further. Shall we still spell the forms of *sein*, 'to be,' *sey* and *seyd*, and the plural of *Brett Breter*, or shall we change them? If we admit this revision in one case, why not do so consistently throughout the entire text, doing away with a multiplicity of needless marks, and subjecting words and forms to a regulated system?

On the other hand, we may follow the present standard orthography, with the aim to establish in the pupil's mind certain prescribed forms, not always consistent, it is true, but representing correct usage at the present time. Were all students advanced, a historical text would be demanded, but then we are met by the query which historical text shall be followed, the original, or a subsequent edition, or the final revision? For ordinary school use, I should prefer a revised orthography, preserving in the notes, or in a text-apparatus at the end, interesting and suggestive changes in readings. In the case of works read mainly by advanced pupils, an exact reprint of the author's text is preferable. Minor orthographic differences will then present little difficulty, and are often full of instruction. The Weimar editors had no choice in their task of preparing a standard edition. Had they undertaken the revision of the text upon the basis of the present forms of the language, it would not have represented the language of the poet, and would have afforded no permanent guide to subsequent generations.

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A FABLIAUX FABLE.

OLD French literature, in addition to its numerous *Ysopets*, possesses several fables which are anonymous and form a part of no regular collection. To this class belongs a poem, half *fabliaux*, half fable, which occurs in the following MSS.:

1. B. N. f. 837, fo. 236-237
2. B. N. f. 1593, fo. 181-182
3. B. N. f. 2173, *Ysopet* No. 103
4. B. N. f. 25545, fo. 70^{ro}-70^{vo}
5. Berne (*B. Bongarsiana*) 354, fo. 63^a-64^a
6. Berlin, Hamilton 459, fo. 31^d-32^b

We have no indications whatever to assist us in assigning it to any given author, but the date of its composition must be placed at a period not later than 1275. This latter point is established by the fact that our two oldest MSS (Hamilton 459, and B. N. f. 25545) must be assigned to about that date.¹

True to its double character, this poem is sometimes found associated in the MSS. with *fabliaux*, and sometimes with fables. Thus in the first, fifth and sixth of the MSS. mentioned above, it occurs in a collection of *fabliaux*; in the second and the fourth also among *fabliaux*, yet at some distance from the *Ysopet* of Marie de France which the MS. likewise contains; while in the third MS. it is actually included among the fables of Marie's *Ysopet* according to the *Index*, but is found *after* the regular epilogue in the MS. itself.

Another point of special interest in regard to this poem is the fact that it is distinctly mentioned in another Old French poem, which is contained in the following MSS.:

1. B. N. f. 837, fo. 213^{vo}-214^{ro}
2. B. N. f. 19152, fo. 69^{vo}-70^{ro}
3. Berne (*B. Bongarsiana*) 354, fo. 65^b-67^a
4. B. M. Addit. 15211, fo. 163^b-168^b (xviii^c).²

This is the more remarkable as it is very seldom that we have direct contemporary testimony for a poem of such small compass. Thus, too, we have it established that the poem just mentioned is of later date than the other one, which was evidently more popular.

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¹ Cf. *Romania* xii, 209; xiii, 630. Also Hervieux, 'Fabulistes Latins,' vol. i, pp. 623-626.

² Frequently published; cf. Montaiglon, 'Recueil Général des Fabliaux,' t. i, pp. 1-12 (ref. p. 11, l. 293); and Bartsch-Horning, 'La Langue et la Littérature Françaises,' cols. 609-618: "Des Deus Bordeors Ribauz" (ref. col. 616, l. 36).